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Violence and Civilization: Gramsci, Sorel, and Machiavelli

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The writings of Antonio Gramsci are highly suggestive for re-thinking the meanings of violence. On the one hand, they aid us in understanding the intellectual history of the concept, in part due to the transmission of debates in the socialist movement about the role of violence from *fin-de-siècle* France to the context of Italy; for example, between the ‘hostile brothers’¹ of Jean Jaurès and Georges Sorel. The evolution of the concept ‘violence,’ particularly in the hands of Gramsci, is an example of the ‘translation’ of this French experience into the Italian movement and its active refashioning on a new terrain.² On the other hand, Gramsci’s writings also illuminate an analysis of violence in his immediate historical context, namely the rising prominence (and rise to power) of regimes in the 1920s and 1930s that deployed means of, what he terms, ‘private violence.’³ This violence formed an unofficial part of strategies to obstruct the development of political tendencies that posed a threat to the dominant ruling groups.⁴ The originality of Gramsci’s thought is marked by his intertwining of these elements of historical perspective and engaged strategic analysis (motivated by an impassioned concern for the future). In order to benefit from this distinctive perspective, and because his views on the topic have been treated seldom in detail,⁵ I propose that the relatively neglected Gramscian perspective on violence is a fruitful complement to more widely circulating conceptions from this period, such as that advanced by Walter Benjamin in his *Critique of Violence*.⁶

Gramsci’s mature writings in his *Prison Notebooks* provide a record of his philosophical encounter with two key theorists in respect to the development of his own position on questions of violence and civilization: Niccolò Machiavelli, the Florentine author of *The Prince*,⁷ and Sorel, the revolutionary syndicalist and author of *Reflections on Violence*.⁸ Sorel’s text is one that Gramsci read in its first edition,⁹ but with which he also engages in his later prison writings.¹⁰ The literature contains relatively few attempts to explore Gramsci’s relation to Sorel in detail.¹¹ In contrast, Gramsci’s engagement with Machiavelli is one of the most celebrated aspects of his prison writings, and it has correspondingly provoked unprecedented levels of comment and scholarship.¹² In this chapter, I will

restrict myself to examining briefly the meanings of violence in Gramsci in relation to each of these figures in turn. First, I will review Gramsci's reading of Sorel. The latter's 'shocking conclusion,'¹³ as Jeremy Jennings points out, is that (a certain type of) violence is the only means of salvation to prevent the world from descending into barbarism. This proletarian violence, in the form of the political myth of the 'General Strike,'¹⁴ is central to Sorel's transformative project to turn 'the men of today into the free producers of tomorrow working in workshops where there are no masters.'¹⁵ In these arguments, Sorel felt that he was completing the doctrine of Marx,¹⁶ in a way that had been impossible for the latter because Marx was not 'acquainted with the facts'¹⁷ of subsequent economic conflicts and strikes. We, says Sorel, 'have ideas about violence that it would have been difficult for him to form.'¹⁸

Gramsci draws intellectual vitality for his own re-articulation of Marxism as a 'philosophy of praxis'¹⁹ in part from the formative political and cultural influence that Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* had on his generation in Italy. Indeed, Sorel was one of the ideological sources of the cultural movement of Italian Futurism, and his ideas helped to inspire its leading proponents, such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti.²⁰ The worshipful celebration of energetic life force by this 'first multi-disciplinary avant-garde'²¹ is reflected, albeit critically, in Gramsci's enduring engagement, in increasingly complex forms, with the 'language of life' in his later writings.²² Gramsci's engagement with and criticism of the fusion of Marx with the diverse influences (including Henri Bergson, Émile Durkheim, Ernest Renan, and Friedrich Nietzsche, among others) found in Sorel's work, helps to shape a number of the concepts in, what we might today call, the Gramscian conceptual toolbox. I will focus primarily on Sorel's notion of the political myth. Building on Sorel's distinction between myth (a 'body of images capable of evoking instinctively all the sentiments'²³) and Utopia (a 'deceptive image of the future'²⁴), Gramsci transforms Sorel's concept of political myth by marshalling resources acquired through the development of his reading of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.²⁵ Gramsci accepts Sorel's case that only the political myth is able to mobilize the strongest inclinations of a people, to create a violent force that can cleave the social fabric. However, Gramsci criticises Sorel's displacement of a confrontation with the difficulties, and perhaps dangers, involved in the concrete (programmatic) elaboration of the constructive aspect of this process onto the principle of the irrational. I argue that Gramsci's 'translation' of the predominantly negative and destructive moment of social cleavage identified by

Sorel in the form of the proletarian violence of the ‘General Strike’²⁶ is realised through its transformation and synthesis with his evolving reading of Machiavelli. The summary or ‘*précis*’²⁷ of this development is the notion of the modern Prince as a ‘myth-Prince,’²⁸ which, as Peter Thomas explains, goes beyond the defensive moment to a ‘creative phase of the constitution *ex-novo* of a collective will that aims to institute genuinely new political forms.’²⁹ Finally, I will indicate that Gramsci’s uses of the term violence, while significant in themselves, are also illuminating when read against the terms set out by Benjamin in his *Critique of Violence*. I will conclude by suggesting that we can use Benjamin’s distinction between ‘mythical’³⁰ and ‘divine violence’³¹ as a means to evaluate the success of Gramsci’s re-invention of the constructive elements of the political myth as modern myth-Prince. Its contemporary relevance may hinge on whether we can describe the wider project of the modern Prince more properly as a form of mythical violence or as a form of divine power.

Violence in Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*

The term ‘violence’ (*violenza*), along with its cognates, appears in Gramsci’s writings as part of the wider formation of his thought. This semantic field includes related concepts, such as the notions of coercion, brutality and force, as well as apparently opposing terms, such as consensus and education.³² His considerations of violence take up a wide variety of themes: from discussions of religion³³ as a ‘way of rationalising the world and real life,’³⁴ popular unrest in the South of Italy during the *Risorgimento*,³⁵ and Machiavelli and anti-Machiavellianism in Italy,³⁶ to violence in the Renaissance,³⁷ the relation between Sorel and Jacobinism,³⁸ and the connections between passion, economics and politics.³⁹ In the critical edition of Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*, the term ‘violence’⁴⁰ makes twenty-nine appearances in twenty-five distinct notes. This is a rather small quantity of appearances, relative to the more canonical concepts in his lexicon (such as hegemony, subalternity, civil society, and common sense).⁴¹ However, this slight number belies the significant role that notions associated with ‘violence’ play in his approach to some complex issues. Thus, as Guido Liguori points out, the understanding of violence associated with Sorel’s ‘spirit of cleavage’⁴² strongly contributes to ‘forming Gramsci’s specific attention to revolutionary subjectivity.’⁴³ Gramsci bases his distinctive theory of subjectivity on the historical

formation of persons and personality, not simply in a juridical sense, but in a wider ethico-political articulation.⁴⁴ This is particularly the case, as we will see, when Gramsci addresses the role of political myth in the organization of popular passions and sentiment.

From the very first appearance of the term violence in the *Prison Notebooks* (approximately February 1929),⁴⁵ during a literature review entitled ‘Sundry Bibliography,’⁴⁶ Gramsci’s interest in the concept is immersed in the French political and cultural situation. We find a discussion of Sorel’s connection to the ‘Proudhon Circle’⁴⁷ in close proximity to his wider concern with the historical development of Action française, the far-right grouping led by Charles Maurras. In further discussion of some literature that he regards as marginal, Gramsci refers to the advocacy of the use of violence against the workers as a ‘sign of the times.’⁴⁸ In June/July 1930, Gramsci addresses the thematic issue of spontaneity and leadership within the ‘history of subaltern classes.’⁴⁹ In the context of assessing Henri De Man’s studies of folklore and the history of popular psychology, Gramsci also refers to traditions ‘severed by violence,’⁵⁰ demonstrating a cultural usage of the term. Gramsci is not concerned with the preservation of, often superstitious, folklore for its own sake. He seeks to elaborate a political education based on popular experience, rather than one drawn into conflict with science and modern theory. Gramsci argues that education, or political leadership, must devote ‘itself to real people in specific historical relations, with specific sentiments, ways of life, fragments of worldviews, etc.,’⁵¹ if it is to be ‘living’⁵² and ‘historically effective.’⁵³ Far from disdaining or neglecting popular thought, Gramsci hopes to awaken among the passive elements of society a ‘consciousness of themselves as creators of historical and institutional values.’⁵⁴ Gramsci aims to raise this critical awareness by making more coherent the ‘spontaneous philosophy’⁵⁵ found in the language, common sense, religion and folklore of the subaltern groups. His ambitious overall project is to develop the ‘intuitions of a future philosophy,’⁵⁶ which could be the germ of a new form of culture, and ultimately a united human civilization. So, we might ask the question: what is the role, according to Gramsci, of violence, and more specifically of different types of violence, in this project? How does he envisage the process of differentiation or ‘cleavage’ in society—the destruction of ‘existing moral and juridical relations,’⁵⁷ and the ‘positive phase’⁵⁸ of the construction of new forms that might follow?

Prior to addressing these questions, the multiplicity of Gramsci's use of the term 'violence' is of interest in itself. He discusses instances of violence of a straightforwardly physical nature; for example, in reference to the suppression of the Paris Commune, 'the popular blood-letting of 1871.'⁵⁹ Yet, as we have seen above, his usage of the term violence is also concerned with the severing of traditions, such as those embedded in folklore. Gramsci considers more subtle, structural forms of violence represented by the processes of dispersion and fragmentation of the traditions of subaltern groups. Gramsci's reflections are thus also sensitive, through his conception of civil society, to the decentralized and pre-conscious forms of coercion that actively constitute the passivity of subaltern groups at all levels including discourse.⁶⁰ This embraces elements akin to, what we might describe today in Bourdieusian terms as, 'symbolic violence.'⁶¹ This discursive element of Gramsci's thought, perhaps deploying his linguistic training,⁶² was later to become a rather exclusive focus of the reading of Gramsci advanced by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe in their formulation of a new radical-democratic politics.⁶³ Gramsci also considers cultural movements in broad historical terms, such as the creative forces unleashed in Italy during the early Renaissance period, which 'was much more violent than in France.'⁶⁴ Gramsci appears to combine these physical (personnel) and cultural (tradition) modes in a note on Japanese culture (October/November 1930), when he discusses Christianity in Japan, which was 'violently extirpated in the early decades of the seventeenth century.'⁶⁵ Most interesting perhaps is the coercion or implicit violence involved in Gramsci's analysis of the micro-dynamics of social transformations. In particular, the 'molecular' processes of transformation and conformism that become increasingly rapid and extensive under conditions of modernity.⁶⁶ In this sense, we might also consider Gramsci's discussion of the 'crisis of adaption'⁶⁷ that labourers undergo in conforming to the coercively applied rationalised production techniques of Fordism and Taylorism.⁶⁸ In a note entitled 'Passion and Politics' (February 1933), Gramsci discusses a further example of violence in relation to his abovementioned theory of personality. Deliberating on the role of status and rank in human behaviour, he gives the example of a soldier on guard duty: 'If someone has a duty to do for a certain length of time and is not relieved at the proper time he gets angry and even reacts with extreme...violence.'⁶⁹ Gramsci continues, '[t]hat in these episodes there is a manifestation of "personality" means only that the personality of a lot of men is mean and narrow but it is still personality.'⁷⁰ For Gramsci, there are

forces that tend to keep personality among the mass of the population restricted to this narrow level, which, while appearing trivial, can result in reactions ‘in which life and personal liberty are put in jeopardy.’⁷¹

While Gramsci’s writings intersect with the theme of violence across a range of topics too wide to address in a single chapter, his discussions return repeatedly to, and are often flanked by, his reflections on the political philosophy of Machiavelli and Sorel. It is for this reason that I will focus on Gramsci’s conception of violence in its relation to his readings of these two thinkers. Gramsci founds his overall assessment on a theoretical framework that rests on, what he calls, ‘the “dual perspective”⁷² in political action and the life of the State.’⁷³ This multifaceted theory appears in Gramsci’s writings with particular reference to Machiavelli:

The dual perspective can present itself on various levels, from the most elementary to the most complex; but these can all theoretically be reduced to two fundamental levels, corresponding to the dual nature of Machiavelli’s Centaur—half-animal and half-human. They are the levels of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilization, of the individual moment and of the universal moment (“Church” and “State”), of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy, etc.⁷⁴

I would suggest that in its guise as a nexus of violence and civilization,⁷⁵ this dual perspective is key to an understanding of the construction of Gramsci’s emancipatory project and its relation to the thought of Sorel and Machiavelli.⁷⁶

Sorel, Gramsci, and Violence

It is something of an understatement to argue that an efficacious deployment of Sorel’s terminology in the present conjuncture requires a preliminary work of intellectual archaeology. For Sorel, the question of the meanings of violence goes to the heart of much wider social concerns.⁷⁷ Thus, he explains, in the introduction to the first publication of his *Reflections on Violence* in the syndicalist newspaper *Le*

Mouvement Socialiste (1906), ‘if we wish to discuss socialism seriously, we must first of all investigate the functions of violence in present social conditions.’⁷⁸ Following references in Marx, Sorel drew inspiration for his conception of the intellectual and moral renewal of civilization from Giambattista Vico’s *New Science* (first published in 1725 and republished in reworked form in 1744).⁷⁹ In Vico’s cyclical conception of history, following a period of decadence, there is a break or return (*ricorso*) to a primitive phase.⁸⁰ After the moral conservatism of his earliest writings, Sorel insisted that, in his own time, the syndicalist movement represented a new beginning in which everything was ‘instinctive, creative and poetic.’⁸¹ In this way, the question of moral renewal is central to Sorel’s thought. Indeed, the ‘intellectual and moral reform’⁸² of Sorel, a notion also found in the work of Benedetto Croce,⁸³ is one of the elements that Gramsci preserves, albeit within a radically transformed matrix, in his conceptual toolkit. Sorel’s enthusiastic support for the Dreyfusard cause also illustrates the moral impulse animating his political thought.⁸⁴ Sorel launched sharp criticisms of the parliamentary socialists, because of their moral weakness and, what he saw as, their betrayal of this movement. As Jennings explains, in the hands of these Third Republic politicians this cause ‘was turned [in Sorel’s view] into an excuse for careerism and political advancement by politicians only too ready to adorn themselves with the privileges of power.’⁸⁵

Commentators often remark upon Sorel’s oscillating support for diverse political tendencies, from the so-called ‘new school’⁸⁶ of revolutionary syndicalism, to his fleeting engagement with young right-radical monarchists (which would later provide inspiration for Mussolini), and finally Sorel’s defence of Lenin and bolshevism. While generally regarded as a form of intellectual infirmity, Theodore Zeldin argues that these enthusiasms cast Sorel in the light of a distinctly modern figure.⁸⁷ On this reading, Sorel’s apparently disparate succession of positions reflects something of the ubiquitous condition of modern life. Sorel’s refusal to settle for a conformism motivated by a ‘democratic’ middle ground seems to speak to the fragmented and increasingly polarized viewpoints that dominate our present conjuncture. From the *Prison Notebooks*, we can see that Gramsci had read in the journal *Critica Fascista* (September 15 1933) the review of a recent book that posed Sorel’s thought as a form of revolutionary conservatism.⁸⁸ Despite his interest in conservatives such as Renan, or the irrationalist tendencies of Bergson and Nietzsche, Gramsci does not see Sorel as an ‘aristocratic rebel’⁸⁹ of the

Nietzschean type.⁹⁰ Recent scholarship on Sorel encourages us to examine not the well-known image of Sorel as an ‘enthusiast of violence,’⁹¹ but rather the ‘conceptual “topography” of Sorel’s methods.’⁹² Sorel characterises his own method as ‘diremption,’⁹³ which as Eric Brandom explains, ‘is an explicit attempt to escape a dialectical approach to social reality.’⁹⁴ In so doing, Brandom argues, Sorel is making a ‘metaphysical choice for pluralism over unity,’⁹⁵ which Sorel believes ‘better corresponds to the practice of scientific and historical work.’⁹⁶ Moreover, Brandom points out that, for Sorel, there is an ‘intimate connection between rationalism and Statism.’⁹⁷ While Gramsci accepts that Sorel’s ideas could potentially justify disparate practical attitudes, ‘due to the variety and the incoherence of his point of view,’⁹⁸ Gramsci’s overall assessment is that Sorel held a ‘radical “liberalism” (or theory of spontaneity),’⁹⁹ which prevented the domination of these conservative consequences.

Gramsci’s first significant theoretical interest in the concept of violence (in November 1930) manifests itself, as so often in his *Prison Notebooks*, with an instruction to himself to study further Sorel’s views on violence and their connection with his anti-Jacobin sentiment. Thus, Gramsci says, ‘[c]heck how Sorel reconciles his hatred for the Jacobins-optimists with his theories of violence. Sorel’s philippics against the Jacobins are incessant. (See his “Lettre à M. Daniel Halévy” in *Mouvement Socialiste*, 16 August and 15 September 1907).’¹⁰⁰ Gramsci returns to this topic in a later note (August-December 1932),¹⁰¹ in which he considers the difficulties of giving an overall assessment of Sorel’s work. On the one hand, Gramsci explains Sorel’s ‘curious anti-Jacobinism—sectarian, mean and anti-historical’¹⁰²—as a product of the suppression of the Paris Commune of 1871, which ‘severed the umbilical cord between the “new people” and the tradition of 1793.’¹⁰³ On the other hand, Gramsci regards Sorel as withholding from a full engagement in politics, placing himself above everyday struggles. According to Gramsci, Sorel is therefore to some extent guilty of the self-same crimes that he disdains in other intellectuals. Thus, for Gramsci, a ‘careful analysis’¹⁰⁴ is required to distinguish between the superficial elements of his work and the substantial elements that ‘can be admitted to the circle of modern culture.’¹⁰⁵ Sorel’s anti-Jacobin views find expression in his *Reflections on Violence* through his lengthy discussions of the history of the French Revolution. Sorel is supportive of Alexis de Tocqueville’s view of the Revolution, emphasising the continuity between the *ancien régime* and modern France.¹⁰⁶ Gramsci takes issue with Sorel’s identification of the original Jacobin revolutionaries

of 1793 with the inheritors of this tradition, particularly those of the post-1848 generation. The latter are representatives of, what Gramsci elsewhere describes as, ‘mummified Jacobin ideologies.’¹⁰⁷ For Gramsci, we should not conflate the abstract and utopian schemes of these inheritors with the real value of the non-mummified form of the original movement,¹⁰⁸ which was, after all, responsible for the creation of the national-popular elements of the modern French republic.

While Gramsci draws on Sorel for inspiration in his conception of political myth, for Gramsci, the myth he wishes to construct is not Sorel’s ‘General Strike,’¹⁰⁹ but a ‘modern Prince’¹¹⁰:

Machiavelli’s *Prince* could be studied as an historical exemplification of the Sorelian myth—i.e. of a political ideology expressed neither in the form of a cold utopia nor as learned theorising, but rather by a creation of concrete phantasy which acts on a dispersed and shattered people to arouse and organise its collective will.¹¹¹

Thus, Gramsci describes the modern Prince as a ‘myth-Prince’¹¹² by fusing elements from Machiavelli and Sorel. Whereas Sorel seems predominantly concerned with the moment of intense experience (which he describes in terms of the vividness of colours),¹¹³ Gramsci is also concerned (in a manner that engages with the ‘post-Jacobin hegemony’¹¹⁴ of his own time) with elaborating a constructive moment that will endure. Thus, Gramsci argues that the myth-Prince is a dramatic fusion of a body of images that evokes the passions of the many, but one that is sustained in the formation of a collective will that is articulated in a coherent (that is, rational and effective) form. In this sense, the Brazilian philosopher Carlos Nelson Coutinho argues that Gramsci’s discussions of the modern Prince in the *Prison Notebooks* echo the writings of Rousseau on the ‘General Will’¹¹⁵ in an unacknowledged way. Gramsci’s engagement with Machiavelli and Sorel lend his conception of historical materialism a non-conventional aspect, at least in the sense that it makes explicit an element that is not articulated by Marx and Engels, namely ‘politics as a privileged sphere for a possible intersubjective consensual interaction.’¹¹⁶ Coutinho argues that Gramsci’s work therefore bears some similarities with approaches taken by later figures such as Hannah Arendt and Jürgen Habermas through their respective conceptions

of ‘action’ and ‘communicative action.’¹¹⁷ According to Countinho, Gramsci’s treatment has something to provide in this respect arising from the characteristically concrete nature of his treatment.¹¹⁸

Conclusion: Gramsci, Sorel and Machiavelli

Despite a tendency in some quarters¹¹⁹ to reduce Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to a theory of consent, his writings in the *Prison Notebooks* exhibit a deep concern with what he calls the ‘armour of coercion.’¹²⁰ In his reflection on Machiavelli’s Centaur, Gramsci regards the half-animal and half-human figure of the Centaur as symbolic of the aforementioned ‘dual perspective.’¹²¹ For Gramsci, political thought should seek to elaborate the dialectical unity of these two levels: the elements of both force and consent.¹²² The operation of a hegemonic project combines the coercive apparatuses of the State with the institutions of civil society. These institutions help to provide a consent for the rule of the dominant groups. Commentators frequently present Gramsci primarily as a thinker of civil society,¹²³ but this belies his concern to provide a unitary analysis of these two moments, criticizing any tendency to isolate and divorce them. Gramsci rather re-formulates the common-sense conception of the exteriority of this pair with a critical notion of their unity in the ‘integral state.’¹²⁴ For the purposes of this chapter, it is of interest that Gramsci elaborates a series of conceptual pairings: ‘of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilization.’¹²⁵ In this chain of couples, violence appears, on the one hand, in a prosaic sense as something anathema to culture or civilization. Yet, on the other hand, Gramsci’s analyses also subversively seek to reveal the violence (or perhaps the fraud) within existing civilizations. Consequently, the critical conception of violence reveals its positive non-extortionate meaning as the necessity of the negation of the existing order and the prospect of the construction of not only a new State, but the germ of a new culture, and ultimately a new form of civilization. Thus, violence takes on an ambiguous moral sense, remaining partly pejorative in the conventional sense of the coercive brutality underwriting the existing hegemonic project, but also, as we have seen with Sorel, as a potentially redemptive element of revolutionary violence in the emergence of a new civilization. For Gramsci, this founding would involve both the physical cleaving of the social

fabric, but also, and perhaps more significantly, the overcoming of the incoherence of the subaltern groups imposed by the 'symbolic violence' of civil society.

Gramsci describes a type of violence that arises as a function of the dominant group's hegemonic project through the imposition of its own 'present.' In this process, as Peter Thomas explains, the subaltern groups experience an 'incoherent present,'¹²⁶ or a 'non-presence of the present.'¹²⁷ Deriving inspiration from Canto X of Dante's *Inferno*, in which Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti suffers the torment of not knowing whether his son is living or dead, and perhaps from his own experiences in prison, Gramsci theorises the nightmare-like situation of non-contemporaneity of the subaltern groups. For Gramsci, it is characteristic of the passive condition of subalternity to endure this living hell. As Thomas has shown, Gramsci's reading of Machiavelli during the different phases of his prison writings evolves in parallel with the development of his novel contribution to Dante studies, which focuses on the figure of Cavalcanti.¹²⁸ The non-contemporaneity of the subaltern groups involves the violence of having a social identity coercively constituted from a bizarrely composite and incoherent series of elements of different conceptions of the world. These groups are, in terms evoking the archaeological practices of later thinkers like Foucault, living in the present like a fossil, a walking anachronism.¹²⁹ It is only through the irruption of a positive revolutionary violence that the subalterns can emerge from the margins of history to achieve an autonomous position, and an awareness of their own historical personality. For Gramsci, following Machiavelli, a utopian blueprint cannot form the basis of this transformation of society through which the subalterns can achieve this cathartic passage to the ethico-political moment of autonomy. Gramsci's analysis of the 'integral state,'¹³⁰ as with Machiavelli's analysis of the Prince, can effect a new foundation only to the extent that it is in fact the organic development of already-existing elements within the situation. In the tradition of Sorel, Gramsci argues that only the political myth is able to mobilize the strongest inclinations of a people, to create an emancipatory violence that can cleave the social fabric. Gramsci's methodology seeks to avoid rigid schemata and derives historically his criteria of political interpretation. Thus, in order to deploy the insights of Machiavelli's *Prince* as a 'living' work in the conditions of modernity, he suggests that we must make some quite significant modifications. Machiavelli's notion of a Prince is the personification of a collective will in an individual figure embodying particular prowess in leadership. By contrast, for

Gramsci, the complexity of modern society renders insufficient any notion of political leadership by an individual figure. A modern Prince would therefore require the constitution of a social organism that would be able to negotiate the processes of, what Gramsci calls, the molecular transformations that take place on the complex terrain of contemporary politics.

In Gramsci's articulation of the modern Prince, we find not simply a synonym for the Communist Party, but an experiment in organizational form that engages with a much wider project of civilizational renewal. Gramsci expresses this project in terms that relate to Sorel's conception of violence, but which are, in Gramsci's hands, fundamentally transformed. Thus, Gramsci's modern Prince 'must be and cannot but be the proclaimer and organiser of an *intellectual and moral reform*, which also means creating the terrain for a subsequent development of the national-popular collective will towards the realisation of a superior, total form of modern civilisation.'¹³¹ We can evaluate Gramsci's exploratory mapping of the terrain for the creation of these new forms of political organization using the test provided by Walter Benjamin in his *Critique of Violence*, between 'pernicious'¹³² forms of mythical violence and a 'sovereign'¹³³ or divine power. I would suggest that Gramsci's destructive/constructive notion of political myth as modern Prince, when articulated in its widest sense as an intellectual and moral reform, can be understood as a form of suture of, or perhaps a dual perspective on, the distinction between 'pure divine violence'¹³⁴ and the 'mythical, law-making violence',¹³⁵ which is articulated by Benjamin. Regardless of whether or not this speculatively asserted answer is sustainable without a practical demonstration of its efficacy, I would suggest that the fertility of the comparison affirms the more limited aim of indicating that Gramsci's writings remain a rich repository for re-thinking violence in relation to the political and the ethical.

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¹ André Tosel, 'Jean Jaurès et Georges Sorel, les frères ennemis du socialisme français,' *la Pensée*, vol. 352, octobre-décembre, 2007, pp. 33-49. I would like to acknowledge the late and much-missed André Tosel's intellectual generosity, which I had the good fortune to experience first-hand at the *Ghilarza Summer School 2016*.

² This is perhaps a good example of Edward Said's notion of 'travelling theory.' For a discussion of this concept, see Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983). For the significance and complexity of the notion of 'translation' in Gramsci, see Derek Boothman, 'Translation and Translatability: Renewal of the Marxist Paradigm,' in *Gramsci, Language, and Translation*, edited by Peter Ives and Rocco Lacorte (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010), pp. 107-133.

³ Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Torino: Einaudi, 1975), Q14, §11, p. 1666, my translation. In this chapter, I will reference the Italian Gerratana critical edition of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, followed by the standard reference system giving the notebook number (Q), note number (§), and page number. I will also provide a reference to the currently incomplete English critical edition (Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 3 volumes, edited and translated by Joseph Buttigieg (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), or to a relevant anthology of his writings in English where these translations are available.

⁴ In fact, Gramsci discusses not only the today obvious examples of fascist regimes in Germany and Italy, but also the cases of the United States and Japan, and the interrelationship between politics and religion in their development, particularly the proliferation of religious sects (Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q14, §11, p. 1666).

⁵ For example, there is no entry for *violenza* in the usually comprehensive pages of the *Dizionario gramsciano: 1926-37*, edited by Guido Liguori and Pasquale Voza (Roma: Carocci, 2009). Relevant studies have more often been conducted in the recent season of Italian-language scholarship, see Fabio Frosini, 'Luigi Russo e Georges Sorel: sulla genesi del "moderno Principe" nei Quaderni del carcere di Antonio Gramsci,' *Studi storici*, vol. 54, n. 3, 2013, pp. 545-589.

⁶ Walter Benjamin, 'Critique of Violence,' trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1, 1913-1926, edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 236-252. In this sense, Gramsci's overlooked contribution occupies a position likewise critical of Sorel, but distinct, if potentially complementary to Benjamin.

⁷ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Peter E. Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁸ Georges Sorel, *Réflexions sur la violence*, 2^e édition (Marcel Rivière: Paris, 1910). I will be citing the edition by Jeremy Jennings in Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). This is a revised version of the original English translation by Thomas Ernest Hulme, in Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (New York: Collier, 1961).

⁹ The first Italian edition was published with an introduction by Benedetto Croce, Georges Sorel, *Considerazioni sulla violenza* (Bari: Laterza, 1909).

¹⁰ In this chapter, I will focus my discussion on the meaning of violence in Gramsci's later writings in prison. For a treatment of his relationship to Sorel in an earlier phase of the development of his pre-prison writings, see Darrow Schechter, 'Two Views of the Revolution: Gramsci and Sorel, 1916-1920,' *History of European Ideas*, vol. 12, n. 5, 1990, pp. 637-653.

¹¹ Some exceptions include, Giuseppe L. Goisis, 'Sorel e Gramsci,' in *Sorel e i soreliani: Le metamorfosi dell'attivismo*, edited by Giuseppe L. Goisis (Venezia: Edizioni Helvetica, 1983), and Sandra Salomon, 'Gramsci face à Sorel: histoire de déplacements et de transferts,' in *Modernité de Gramsci*, edited by André Tosel (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1992), pp. 31-84. For an examination of Gramsci's wider dialogue with syndicalist and

libertarian positions in the *Prison Notebooks*, see Carl Levy, 'Gramsci's Cultural and Political Sources: Anarchism in the Prison Writings,' *Journal of Romance Studies*, vol. 12, n. 3, 2012, pp. 44-62.

¹² For the most comprehensive and insightful recent account, see Peter D. Thomas, 'The Modern Prince: Gramsci's Reading of Machiavelli,' *History of Political Thought*, vol. XXXVIII, n. 3, 2017, pp. 523-544.

¹³ Jennings, 'Introduction,' in Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, edited by Jeremy Jennings, translated by Thomas Ernest Hulme (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. xvi.

¹⁴ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 109.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹⁶ Sorel approached this project in a historical moment, around the time of Frederick Engels's death in 1895, which teemed with 'revisions' of Marxism, including that of Eduard Bernstein. See Jeremy Jennings, *Georges Sorel: The Character and Development of his Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), pp. 69-72.

¹⁷ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 30.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁹ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q11, §12, p. 1383/Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 330. For a discussion of the specific importance of this term for Gramsci's conception of philosophy, rejecting the prevalent idea that it is simply a 'code-word' for Marxism, see Peter D. Thomas, 'Gramsci's Marxism: The "Philosophy of Praxis",' in *Antonio Gramsci*, edited by Mark McNally (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 97-117.

²⁰ See Serge Milan, 'Mythe et violence: Georges Sorel dans les manifestes du Futurisme italien,' *Cahiers de Narratologie*, vol. 14, 2008, pp. 1-13: DOI: 10.4000/narratologie.634. Accessed from <http://journals.openedition.org/narratologie/634>, 31 January 2018.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²² For a discussion of the development of the 'language of life' in Gramsci's pre-prison thought, see Michele Ciliberto, 'Gramsci e il linguaggio della "vita",' *Studi storici*, vol. 30, n. 3, 1989, pp. 679-699. I explore Gramsci's later use of the life-death nexus as a diagnostic to account for anachronistic cultural forms in Robert P. Jackson, 'Subalternity and the Mummification of Culture in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*,' *International Gramsci Journal*, vol. 2, n. 1, 2016, pp. 201-225. See also, Robert P. Jackson, 'The "Mummification of Culture" in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*,' in *Revisiting Gramsci's Laboratory: History, Philosophy and Politics in the 'Prison Notebooks'*, edited by Francesca Antonini, Aaron Bernstein, Lorenzo Fusaro, and Robert Jackson (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

²³ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 118.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

²⁵ For a detailed account of the precise chronology of this development, see Thomas, 'The Modern Prince,' pp. 523-544.

²⁶ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 109.

²⁷ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q10.II, §54, p. 1346/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 353.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Q13, §1, p. 1558/*Ibid.*, p. 129.

²⁹ Thomas, 'The Modern Prince,' p. 533.

³⁰ Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, p. 252.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 252.

³² Another distinctive feature of Gramsci's method is his capacity to unite apparently opposing terms within a dialectic of unity-distinction, such as State and civil society, violence and civilization, and so on. For a treatment of Gramsci's dialectical method, see Robert P. Jackson, 'Antonio Gramsci's Dialectic: Past and Present,' in *Materialistische Dialektik bei Marx und über Marx hinaus*, edited by Stefano Breda, Kaveh Boveiri, and Frieder Otto Wolf (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2017), pp. 137-149.

³³ For example, when discussing the literature of Filippo Crispolti and Alessandro Manzoni, Gramsci notes the conflict in society arising from the gap between 'the Gospel that condemns violence and the brutal use of violence' (Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q6, §56, p. 726/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 3, p. 41).

³⁴ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q11, §12, p. 1389/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 337.

³⁵ Gramsci explores the feelings of the people, lacking direction, giving rise to 'brutal acts of random violence' (Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q7, §108, p. 931/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 3, p. 228).

³⁶ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q10.II, §41.X, p. 1316/Antonio Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Derek Boothman (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995), p. 400.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, Q5, §123, p. 647/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 2, p. 336.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, Q11, §66, p. 1498/Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 459.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Q10.II, §58, p. 1351/*Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁴⁰ I survey the simple appearance of *violenza*, and do not include other cognate forms. A wider study than the present could trace associated appearances of: *violenze*, *violent-o/-a/-e/-i*, *violentissima*, *violentemente*, *violent-are/-ato/-ò*.

⁴¹ For a detailed introduction to these concepts, see Guido Liguori, *Gramsci's Pathways* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), and Giuseppe Cospito, *The Rhythm of Thought in Gramsci* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

- ⁴² Sorel conceives the ‘cleavage between the classes’ as the ‘basis of all socialism’ (Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 178). See also Gramsci’s definition of the spirit of cleavage as ‘the progressive acquisition of the consciousness of one’s historical identity’ (Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q3, §49, p. 333/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 2, p. 53).
- ⁴³ Liguori, *Gramsci’s Pathways*, p. 69.
- ⁴⁴ For an examination of Gramsci’s theory of personality in relation to the theme of subjectivity and the political, see Robert P. Jackson, ‘Antonio Gramsci: Persons, Subjectivity, and the Political,’ in *Subjectivity and the Political: Contemporary Perspectives*, edited by Gavin Rae and Emma Ingala (New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 135-158.
- ⁴⁵ I provide dates of Gramsci’s notes based on the chronology established in Giuseppe Cospito, ‘Verso l’edizione critica e integrale dei “Quaderni del carcere”,’ *Studi storici*, vol. 52, n. 4, 2011, pp. 881-904.
- ⁴⁶ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q2, §74, p. 230/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1, p. 318.
- ⁴⁷ A group (established in 1911) around the journalist Georges Valois, influenced by Sorel’s writings.
- ⁴⁸ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q2, §74, p. 230/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1, p. 318.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., Q3, §48, p. 329/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 2, p. 49.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., Q3, §48, p. 329/Ibid., p. 49.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., Q3, §48, p. 330/Ibid., p. 50.
- ⁵² Ibid., Q3, §48, p. 330/Ibid., p. 50.
- ⁵³ Ibid., Q3, §48, p. 330/Ibid., p. 50.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., Q3, §48, p. 330/Ibid., p. 51.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., Q11, §12, p. 1375/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 323.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., Q11, §12, p. 1376/Ibid., p. 324.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., Q13, §1, p. 1557/Ibid., p. 128.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., Q13, §1, p. 1557/Ibid., p. 128.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., Q11, §66, p. 1498/Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 459.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., Q14, §65, pp. 1724-1725/Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985), pp. 129-131.
- ⁶¹ For a comparative examination of the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and Gramsci, see Robert P. Jackson, ‘On Bourdieu and Gramsci,’ *Gramsciana: Rivista Internazionale di Studi su Antonio Gramsci*, vol. 2, 2016, pp. 139-174.
- ⁶² As a student in Turin, Gramsci took courses in linguistics at the university with the scholar Matteo Bartoli.
- ⁶³ Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London: Verso, 1985), which is criticized extensively in Nicola Badaloni, *Il problema dell’immanenza nella filosofia politica di Antonio Gramsci* (Venezia: Arsenale Editrice, 1988).
- ⁶⁴ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q5, §123, p. 647/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 2, p. 366.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid., Q5, §50, p. 580/Ibid., p. 306.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., Q17, §51, p. 1947/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 267.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., Q22, §12, p. 2171/Ibid., p. 310.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., Q22, §12, p. 2170/Ibid., p. 309.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid., Q10.II, §58, p. 1351/Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 393.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid., Q10.II, §58, p. 1352/Ibid., p. 393.
- ⁷¹ Ibid., Q10.II, §58, p. 1352/Ibid., p. 394.
- ⁷² For a contextualised reading of this often-misunderstood ‘dual perspective’ in Gramsci, see Peter Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2009), pp. 165-167.
- ⁷³ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q13, §14, p. 1576/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 169.
- ⁷⁴ Ibid., Q13, §14, p. 1576/Ibid., pp. 169-170. (See also the first version of this note, Ibid., Q8, §86, p. 991/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 3, p. 284.)
- ⁷⁵ It is of interest that Gramsci offers an alternative formulation of this nexus in an earlier note (March-August 1931), ‘with an implicit judgement of libertarian flavour,’ as the relationship between violence and *fraud*, when discussing Francesco Guicciardini, a contemporary of Machiavelli (see Ibid., Q6, §87, p. 763/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 3, p. 74). This casts a rather more critical light on the latter term in the coupling violence/civilization. (These reflections might also be compared with Benjamin’s distinction between lying and fraud, see Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, pp. 244-245.)
- ⁷⁶ Thomas notes the importance of Gramsci’s addition of the description of this nexus as a ‘dialectical relation’ in the second version of this note (Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, p. 167, fn. 27).
- ⁷⁷ In this chapter, I focus on the influence of Sorel’s *Reflections on Violence*, however, Michele Filippini has recently reconstructed the possible importance of Sorel’s earlier theoretical reflections (particularly his studies of the sociology of Émile Durkheim) for Gramsci’s relationship to social scientific thought, see Michele Filippini, *Using Gramsci: A New Approach* (London: Pluto, 2017), pp. 32-37.
- ⁷⁸ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 39.

⁷⁹ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, translated from the third edition (1744) by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1948).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁸¹ Georges Sorel, 'Le syndicalisme révolutionnaire,' *Le Mouvement Socialiste*, n. 17, 1905, pp. 265-280. See also, Richard Vernon, 'On the barbarism of revolution,' p.115, in *Commitment and Change: Georges Sorel and the Idea of Revolution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 111-120.

⁸² Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 90. Cf. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q13, §1, p. 1560/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 132.

⁸³ It is interesting that Gramsci discusses the correspondence of Sorel with Benedetto Croce, who is perhaps Gramsci's prime intellectual interlocutor (Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q11, §66, p. 1499/Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 459). Indeed Gramsci's notion of a 'philosophy of praxis' is also first mentioned in Antonio Labriola's correspondence with Sorel (See Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, p. 260, fn. 44).

⁸⁴ The movement protesting the imprisonment of Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus on false charges of treason.

⁸⁵ Jennings, 'Introduction,' p. ix.

⁸⁶ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 40.

⁸⁷ Theodore Zeldin, 'Foreword,' p. vii, in Jeremy Jennings, *Georges Sorel: The Character and Development of his Thought* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 1985), pp. vii-ix.

⁸⁸ Michael Freund, *Georges Sorel: Der revolutionäre Konservatismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann Verlag, 1932).

⁸⁹ Domenico Losurdo, *Nietzsche, il ribelle aristocratico. Biografia intellettuale e bilancio critico* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002).

⁹⁰ Indeed, Sorel's actual family background is of a distinctly rural middle-class type. He leads an entire career as a civil engineer prior to his interventions into political philosophy.

⁹¹ Eric Brandom, 'Georges Sorel's Dilemma: Hegel, Marxism and Anti-Dialectics,' *History of European Ideas*, vol. 42, n. 7, 2016, pp. 937-950 (p. 938).

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 938. For the origins of the idea of Sorel's 'topography,' see also, Willy Gianinazzi, *Naissance du mythe moderne: Georges Sorel et la crise de la pensée savant, 1889-1914* (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2006).

⁹³ Brandom, 'Georges Sorel's Dilemma,' p. 938.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 938. In this respect, Sorel is in direct conflict with Gramsci's dialectical position, although this fact appears to manifest itself in Gramsci's reflections only indirectly through his critique of Sorel's view of Proudhon.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 938.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 938. Further comparison of Sorel's position with Benjamin's attempts to provide a modern alternative to dialectics would be a fruitful further line of enquiry.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 943.

⁹⁸ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q17, §20, pp. 1923-1924, my translation.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Q17, §20, pp. 1923-1924, my translation.

¹⁰⁰ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q4, §70, p. 513/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 2, p. 242.

¹⁰¹ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q11, §66, pp. 1494-1500/Gramsci, *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 454-460.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 1498/*Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 1498/*Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1499/*Ibid.*, p. 460.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1499/*Ibid.*, p. 460.

¹⁰⁶ See Sorel, *Reflections*, p. 80.

¹⁰⁷ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q16, §9, p. 1864/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 399.

¹⁰⁸ For a full discussion of Gramsci's conception of mummification, see Jackson, 'The Mummification of Culture,' pp. 201-225.

¹⁰⁹ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 109.

¹¹⁰ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q13, §1, p. 1558/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 129.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, Q13, §1, pp. 1555-1556/*Ibid.*, pp. 125-126.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Q13, §1, p. 1558/*Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹¹³ Thus, according to Sorel, the myth of the General Strike 'colours with an intense life all the details of the composition presented to consciousness' (Sorel, *Reflections*, p. 118). This is consonant with Sorel's emphasis on the necessity of socialism awakening the 'sentiment of the sublime' among the producers (Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, p. 159).

¹¹⁴ Fabio Frosini, 'L'egemonia e i "subalterni". Utopia, religione, democrazia,' *International Gramsci Journal*, vol. 2, n. 1, 2016, pp. 126-166.

¹¹⁵ Carlos Nelson Coutinho, *Gramsci's Political Thought* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2013), p. 126.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 138.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 138.

¹¹⁹ For one example, see Thomas R. Bates, 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 36, no. 2, 1975, pp. 351-366.

¹²⁰ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q6, §88, p. 764/Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 3, p. 75.

¹²¹ Ibid., Q13, §14, p. 1576/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 169-170.

¹²² It would be tempting to ask to what extent we might be able to translate productively between Gramsci's moments of force and consent within a hegemonic order and the elements of 'law-making' and 'law-preserving' in Benjamin's critique of mythical violence. Benjamin notes that 'Sorel rejects every kind of program, of utopia—in a word, of law-making—for the revolutionary movement' (Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, p. 246). This investigation puts into question the place of Gramsci, which is at a critical remove from Sorel's position, in relation to Benjamin's framework.

¹²³ In so doing, there is a tendency to assimilate Gramsci's theory of hegemony one-sidedly to an idealistic position, see Bates, 'Gramsci and the Theory of Hegemony,' pp. 356-357.

¹²⁴ See Liguori, *Gramsci's Pathways*, pp. 1-25.

¹²⁵ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q13, §14, p. 1576/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 170.

¹²⁶ Thomas, *Gramscian Moment*, p. 284.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 283.

¹²⁸ See Thomas, 'The Modern Prince,' p. 537.

¹²⁹ Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Q11, §12, p. 1377/Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 324.

¹³⁰ Ibid., Q13, §18, pp. 1589-1597/Ibid., pp. 158-167.

¹³¹ Ibid., Q13, §1, p. 1560/Ibid., pp. 132-133, my italics.

¹³² Benjamin, *Critique of Violence*, p. 252.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 252.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 252.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 252.